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WEEKLY REPORT

THE SITUATION IN THE CONGO

State Dept. review
completed

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Situation in the Congo

(Information as of 1700 EST 20 April)

SUMMARY

The rebellion in the northeast still flickers. The main issue seems decided there, but rebel bands, some hardier than others, continue to ambush small mercenary detachments. In Albertville, by Lake Tanganyika, rumors abound of imminent attacks and of invasion from Tanzania, but few insurgents are to be seen. The rebels' foreign sympathizers, increasingly aware of the schisms and weaknesses in the rebel ranks, are following separate courses. Uganda and the Sudan are now aloof.

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Egypt--seemingly torn between supporting a near-bankrupt cause or obtaining American wheat--may decide to make a virtue of necessity.

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1. Military Situation

Mercenary patrols in the northeast are meeting some opposition, but probably not enough to seriously affect government operations. On 14 April, a European mercenary force pushing south from Paulis encountered what it termed "stiff resistance," but nonetheless captured Wamba, once reputed to be a rebel strongpoint. Three days later, a 25-man South African patrol ran into a fairly well-executed rebel ambush 50 miles northwest of Paulis and suffered five casualties. The South Africans plan to return to this area in greater force soon.

The general consensus appears to be, however, that the mercenaries' most important task in the northeast, the sealing of the border, has been accomplished. Happily for the government, most tribal groups on the Sudanese frontier are thoroughly fed up with the rebellion. The paramount chief in the Doruma area, for example, had his two front teeth knocked out when the rebels came in August, his car stolen, and his village sacked. Doruma tribesmen are now said to be appealing for Mausers with which to hunt down rebel stragglers. Colonel Hoare thinks that a few insurgents may infiltrate from the Sudan, but doubts they will be able to do much damage.

Tribes in the Congolese interior may be more difficult to "winkle out" (Hoare's expression). South of Wamba, where the rain forest begins, the people are said to be adamantly antigovernment, and 200 miles west of Paulis at Buta, the principal tribe is also reputed to be hostile. At Buta, the rebels are well armed and led by an allegedly redoubtable insurgent leader named Colonel Makwando. With outside supply no longer available, and with hope fading, it seems unlikely that either the rain-forest dwellers or Makwando's partisans will do anything more than make things locally unpleasant.

Stanleyville continues quiet, but food is short. The river passage to Bumba, although less perilous than before, is still dangerous enough to discourage merchants from sending adequate supplies to the city. Insurance, when available, is exorbitant. The government is not attempting to clear the rebels from

river banks. A Congo Army - mercenary detachment on 17 April stationed itself at a position about halfway between Stanleyville and Bumba. Unfortunately, on the 19th, the detachment's jeep-borne commander accidentally killed himself when the trigger of his automatic rifle became caught on the windshield wiper switch.

Despite frequent alarms, the periphery of the Fizi salient is fairly quiet. Uvira, on the Burundi border, has not been attacked in over a week. Albertville, although nervous over stories of nearby rebels, continues unmolested. North of Albertville, the last reported action was on 14 April.

Government troops in the area are still of inferior quality. Although there are 22 mercenaries, including five officers, in Albertville proper, none will admit to being commander.

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However, Colonel Hoare says that he intends to move some 250 South Africans to Albertville when the northeast is "stabilized"--perhaps in three weeks' time. He thinks the campaign to clear the Fizi salient will be long and difficult because of the wild terrain and the apparent allegiance of the reportedly well-armed Fizi tribesmen to the rebel cause.

The patrol of Lake Tanganyika continues. On 6 April a B-26 sank a 40-foot powerboat on the Congolese side of the lake. The boat was similar to a vessel seen earlier by a lake steamer captain at Kigoma in Tanzania.

2. The Rebels and Their Sympathizers

Little additional information is available about the apparently fruitless "unity" conference held by rebel leaders in Cairo early this month. The head of one insurgent faction, Egide Bocheley-Davidson, claimed on 19 April that more such negotiations were scheduled. Even if they are, it seems unlikely that they will be any more successful than the earlier talks.

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It is unclear whether Egypt, the prime mover in getting the original conference under way, intends to continue its active support of the rebel cause.

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It may be that Nasir has wearied of the endeavor.

On 17 April, one of Nasir's advisers told US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Talbot in Cairo that the failure of the rebel conference there was the "direct result" of Egyptian efforts. The adviser alleged that Cairo had instructed Gbenye not to go to the meeting. The allegation probably was false, but the fact that it was made may be an indication that Egypt wants to disengage.

In any event, no Egyptian arms deliveries to the rebels have been detected since 7 April.

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Nor have other rebel-bound shipments by radical Africans been observed since then.

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[redacted] Leopoldville's domestic radio announced that Khartoum's ambassador there had informed Tshombé of "the Sudanese Government's decision to suspend all arms...traffic to the rebels via the Sudan." (On the same day, rebel "foreign minister" Kanza was in Khartoum, possibly to protest such a decision.)

[redacted]

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In Tanzania, it is now confirmed that munitions [redacted] were unloaded from the Soviet ship Fizik Lebedev, which put in to Dar es Salaam on 15 April. Most of the tonnage appears to have been ammunition, removed amid tight security precautions to a dock-side warehouse. It seems likely that some of it is destined for Congolese rebels, of whom several thousand are said to have gathered at Kigoma, on Lake Tanganyika.

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Whether the munitions, or the rebels for that matter, reach the Congo remains to be seen. [redacted]

[redacted]

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3. African Support for the Congo Government

Five moderate West African states led by Ivory Coast President Houphouet-Boigny have launched a major effort to implement plans first outlined last February to provide military and administrative assistance to the Leopoldville government. This initiative is regarded by the sponsoring governments as an essential part of a broader scheme to organize the continent's moderates against radical African--notably Arab and Ghanaian--pressures, and Communist--

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particularly Chinese--inroads. Their drive gained new impetus last week from the abortive attempt on the life of the President of Niger by a member of a Ghana-based dissident movement supported by Peiping.

At a meeting in Abidjan earlier this month Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger, Togo, and Senegal agreed to press for Congo's immediate admission to their embryonic African and Malagasy Common Organization (OCAM), presently composed of 13 ex-French territories and the former Belgian trust territory, Rwanda. Once Leopoldville becomes part of the OCAM "family," the Abidjan group and any other OCAM members willing to help Tshombé are to make available both military and lower level administrative personnel. The troops are to be drawn mainly from the pool of 10,500 African servicemen recently demobilized from the French Army. They would be employed to secure pacified areas so as to free Congolese Army forces for anti-rebel operations in place of the white mercenaries.

To win support for this plan, which is sure to be resisted by the leftist regime in Brazzaville and probably by some other OCAM states, the Abidjan group is sending special emissaries to many African and a few European capitals. According to Togolese President Grunitsky, these consultations will be followed by a second meeting among interested states to work out detailed arrangements. The sponsors have all indicated that as the program moves forward they would require financial and material help from the US and other Western countries.

France, whose attitude is especially important because of its close ties with OCAM states, was previously cool to the plan, but has recently appeared more favorably inclined now that Tshombé seems to be more acceptable to Africans. Paris is probably also increasingly sensitive to concern among many moderates over Ghanaian machinations and over Arab and Communist intervention in Black Africa.

Brussels, where the Abidjan scheme probably ultimately originated, has already instructed

Belgian military technicians to study how African contingents might be used in the Congo and also how Congolese authorities might be brought to accept such aid. Although Tshombé did try to apply for admission to OCAM last month--only to have his overture spurned by the organizations' current head, the President of Mauritania--Tshombé, Kasavubu and army chief Mobutu are not prepared to dismiss the mercenaries, and Mobutu for one strongly opposes the reintroductions of other African troops under any circumstances.

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